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## 7 Reasons to Plan a Visit to Napa Valley's Alpha Omega Winery

March 25, 2017 - By Fran Miller

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Alpha Omega winery exudes excellence. From its private tasting rooms adorned with world-class art, to exceptional wine club events, to its end product – dazzling, labor-intensive wines – Alpha Omega is an example of the levels to which a vintner will go to achieve well-deserved distinction.

In just ten years of operation, Alpha Omega has risen swiftly in Napa's luxe wine ranks due to the detailed attention of owners Robin and Michelle Baggett who have gathered the best talent, and the best grapes, to create award-winning varietals. In that process, the Baggetts have also created a sense of place that delivers hospitality reflective of Napa Valley's relaxed elegance. To spend an afternoon at Alpha Omega is to experience the best that a Napa Valley wine experience can offer. Here are seven reasons to plan a visit now:

**Elevated hospitality:** The Alpha Omega property is stunning. The Baggetts have spared no expense in creating a warm and welcoming environment in which to experience their wines. The central, high-ceilinged tasting room looks west to the Mayacamas mountain range, and several refined, private spaces are available by reservation for more intimate tastings. A brand new, beautifully appointed Library Cellar offers enthusiasts a peek behind-the-scenes, in a space that is used by the winemaking team for blending sessions. The sweeping outdoor patio and terrace overlook the winery's most notable feature – a giant reflection pond with shooting fountains. Wine club events are held often on the elegant grounds - from paella parties, to crab feeds, to a down-home barbecue hosted by 'cowboy-at-heart' Robin Baggett himself.



Photo credit: Alpha Omega Winery

**Exceptional vineyards:** When it came to building their brand, the Baggetts placed no limits on their

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winemakers, giving them their complete trust and allowing them to procure the best grapes the Valley provides while also acquiring their own vineyards. Alpha Omega wines are derived from notable vineyards such as Beckstoffer To Kalon and Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper in Oakville, Beckstoffer Dr. Crane and Beckstoffer Las Piedras in St. Helena, Beckstoffer Georges III in Rutherford and Stagecoach in Atlas Peak, Thomas Vineyard in Rutherford and Sunshine Valley in the Oak Knoll District. These diverse terroirs – ranging from valley floor, to hillside, to mountain, to coast – bring complexity and depth to each Alpha Omega varietal.

**Exceptional wine making team:** While superior grapes do often translate to superior wines, it's the touch of a talented winemaker that can turn superior to exceptional.



Photo credit: Jason Tinacci

Winemaker

Jean Hoefliger has been at the Alpha Omega helm since the winery's inception and is arguably one of Napa's brightest winemaking stars. His is a high-risk winemaking style; he was the first winemaker in Napa Valley, and likely the United States, to experiment with barrel fermentation. Realizing that Californians don't necessarily want to age their wines for decades, he created a process that produces a wine that is drinkable at an earlier stage. It's a labor intensive and tricky proposition; tasting, quality control, and maintenance require a great deal of work and energy, but the proof is in the bottle, and is also proven by the fact that other Napa winemakers are now also producing wines in this manner. Hoefliger receives the occasional assist from Michel Roland, Alpha Omega's consulting winemaker and possibly the most famous consulting winemaker in the world. The two began their unique partnership in 2001 and they share the same approach to winemaking. Roland confers with highly regarded wineries throughout the world; he has consulted on four continents and at more than 150 different estates.



**Exceptional wines:** All of Alpha Omega's wines are remarkable, but even the finest wines have their standouts. Alpha Omega's flagship ERA is a beautifully-balanced (and beautifully black-bottled) blend of each of their single vineyard Cabernet Sauvignons. An inaugural vintage named AOX will debut later this year. This rare wine (only 100 cases produced) is tied to neither a varietal or vineyard, and is the blend of the best lots from one vintage. Through instinct, Hoefliger narrowed the barrel choices from 1,200 to four. The selected quartet resulted in a complex, artistic, elegant wine that is laden with nuance and intrigue.

**Exceptional wine tasting experiences:** Enjoy a **Current Selections** tasting (\$50/person) that includes four pours, the **Tour & Tasting** (\$65/person) that includes a tour of the Tank Room, crush pad, and Barrel Room followed by a Vineyard Terrace tasting, the **Single Vineyard Tasting** (\$100/person) that features barrel samples or library offerings with a cheese plate accompaniment, the **Taste of To Kalon**, (\$150/person) an

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Chateaux) and 10 years experience in the travel industry.



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**A 'green' philosophy:** Alpha Omega's land and winery are both certified by Napa Green, a comprehensive environmental certification program for vineyards and wineries in the Valley. The program represents a soil-to-bottle approach to environmental stewardship and winemaking, integrating holistic management practices at every step of the process. AO is the only winery in the Valley to offer three Tesla charging stations, a universal electric vehicle charging station, and a covered parking lot – important for keeping prior wine purchases shaded and out of damaging direct sunlight.

**Last but not least:** Flavorful wines and welcoming ambience are likely motivation enough to put Alpha Omega on your winetasting radar, but if you need one more reason, here it is: Robin and Michelle Baggett are good people. The two support charities in the Napa Valley, Pebble Beach, and San Luis Obispo communities. Robin sits on the board for Napa Valley Vintners, the Wine Institute, Festival Napa Valley, The First Tee of Monterey County and Cal Poly's Athletic Director's Council. Michelle is a board member of the Rutherford Dust Society and St. Helena Hospital Foundation, Founding Board member of the Napa Valley Film Festival and live lot co-chair for the 2017 Auction Napa Valley. The Baggetts are V Foundation for Cancer Research President's Club members and in 2011 were honored by the V Foundation as Vintner Grant Recipients. Upon the winery's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they announced the launch of their Alpha Omega Foundation to benefit deserving causes and nonprofits.

Alpha Omega Winery: 1155 Mee Lane at Highway 29 in St. Helena, CA. (707) 963-9999

Open daily 10am – 6pm. Reservations required Saturdays after 2pm for non-wine club members and at all times for groups of six or more. Alpha Omega is dog-friendly; all dogs must be kept on leash.

Lead photo credit: Suzanne Becker Bronk

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